

THE Christian History;

Containing Accounts of the Propagation and Revival
of Religion in *England Scotland and America.*

Saturday JANUARY 28. 1743. § N^o 48.

The Rev. Mr. Edwards's late additional Account of the State of Religion at Northampton continued.

The Remainder of the COVENANT.

AND if any of us find that we have an *old secret Grudge*
 " against any of our Neighbours, we will not gratify
 " it, but cross it, &endeavour, to our utmost, to root
 " it out, crying to God for his Help; and that we will make
 " it our true & faithful Endeavour, in our Places, that a Party
 " Spirit may not be kept up amongst us, but that it may ut-
 " terly cease; that for the future we may all be one, united
 " in undisturbed Peace, and unsighed Love.

" And those of us that are in Youth, do promise never to allow our selves in any youthful Diversions and Pastimes, in Meetings, or Companies of young People, that we in our Consciences, upon sober Consideration, judge not well to consist with, or would sinfully tend to bind the devoutest, and most engaged Spirit in Religion; or indispose the Mind for that devout, and profitable Attendance on the Duties of the Closet, which is most agreeable to God's Will; or that we in our most impartial Judgment, can think tends to rob God of that Honour which he expects, by our orderly, serious Attendance on Family-Worship.

" And furthermore we promise that we will strictly avoid all Freedoms and Familiarities in Company, attending, either to stir up, or gratify a Lust of Lasciviousness, that we cannot in our Consciences think will be approved by the infinitely pure and holy Eye of God; or that we can think on serious and impartial Consideration, we should be afraid to practise, if we expected in a few Hours to appear before that holy God, to give an Account of our selves to him, as fearing they would be condemned by him as unlawful and impure.

B b b

" We

“ We also promise, with great Watchfulness, to perform
 “ Relative Duties, required by Christian Rules, in the Families we belong to ; as we stand related respectively, towards Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Brothers and Sisters, Masters or Mistresses and Servants.

“ And we now appear before GOD, depending on divine Grace and Assistance, solemnly to devote our whole Lives, to be laboriously spent in the Business of Religion : ever making it our greatest Business, without backsliding from such a Way of living ; not hearkening to the Solicitations of our Sloth, and other corrupt Inclinations, or the Temptations of the World, that tend to draw us off from it ; and particularly, that we will not abuse an Hope, or Opinion that any of us may have of our being interested in CHRIST, to indulge our selves in Sloth, or the more easily to yield to the Solicitations of any sinful Inclinations ; but will run with Perseverance, the Race that is set before us, and work out our own Salvation with Fear and Trembling.

“ And because we are sensible that the keeping these solemn Vows may hereafter, in many Cases, be very contrary to our corrupt Inclinations, and carnal Interests ; we do now therefore appear before GOD, to make a Surrender of all to him, and to make a Sacrifice of every carnal Inclination, and Interest to the great Business of Religion, and the Interest of our Souls.

“ And being sensible of our own Weakness, and the Deceitfulness of our own Hearts, and our Proneness to forget our most solemn Vows, and loose our Resolutions ; we promise to be often strictly examining our selves by these Promises, especially before the Sacrament of the LORD’s Supper ; and beg of GOD that he would, for CHRIST’S Sake, keep us from wickedly dissembling in these our solemn Vows ; and that he who searches our Hearts, and ponders the Path of our Feet, would from Time to Time help us in trying our selves by THIS COVENANT, and help us to keep Covenant with him, and not leave us to our own foolish wicked and treacherous Hearts.

In the Beginning of the Summer 1742, there seem’d to be some Abatement of the Liveliness of People’s Affections in Religion : But yet many were often in a great Height of them. And in the Fall and Winter following there were at Times

Times extraordinary Appearances. But in the *General People's Engagedness in Religion and the Liveliness of their Affections* have been on the Decline : and *some of the young People especially, have shamefully lost their Liveliness and Vigour in Religion, and much of the Seriousness & Solemnity of their Spirits.* But there are *many* that walk as becometh Saints ; and to this Day, there are a considerable Number in the Town that seem to be near to God, and maintain much of the Life of Religion, and enjoy many of the sensible Tokens and Fruits of his gracious Presence.

With Respect to the *late Season of Revival of Religion amongst us,* for *three or four Years past* ; it has been observable, that in the former Part of it, in the Years 1740, and 1741, the Work seem'd to be much *more pure*, having less of a corrupt Mixture, than in the former great Out-pouring of the Spirit in 1735, and 1736. Persons seem'd to be sensible of their former Errors, and had learnt more of their own Hearts, and Experience had taught them more of the Tendency and Consequences of Things : They were now better guarded, and their Affections were not only greater, but attended with greater *Solemnity*, and greater *Humility* and *Self-Distrust*, and greater *Engagedness after holy Living and Perseverance* ; and there were fewer Errors in Conduct. But in the latter Part of it, in the Year 1742, it was otherwise : The Work continued more pure 'till we were infected from abroad : our People hearing, and some of them seeing the Work in other Places, where there was a greater visible Commotion than here, and the outward Appearances were more extraordinary ; were ready to think that the Work in those Places far excell'd what was amongst us ; and their Eyes were dazzled with the high Profession and great Show that some made who came hither from other Places.

That those People went so far beyond them in Raptures and violent Emotions of the Affections, and a vehement Zeal, and what they called Boldness for CHRIST ; our People were ready to think was owing to their far greater Attainments in Grace, and Intimacy with Heaven : They look'd little in their own Eyes in Comparison of them, and were ready to submit themselves to 'em, and yield themselves up to their Conduct, taking it for granted that every Thing was right that they said and did. These Things had a strange Influence on the People, and gave many of them a deep and

unhappy Tin*ture*, that it was a hard and long Labour to deliver 'em from, and which some of them are not fully delivered from to this Day.

The *Effects* and *Consequences* of Things amongst us plainly shews the following Things, viz. That the Degree of *Grace* is by no Means to be judged of by the Degree of *Joy*, or the Degree of *Zeal*; and that indeed we can't at all determine by these Things, who are gracious and who are not; and that it is not the *Degree* of religious Affections, but the *Nature* of them that is chiefly to be looked at. Some that have had very great Raptures of *Joy*, and have been extraordinarily fill'd, (as the vulgar Phrase is) and have had their Bodies overcome, and that very often, have manifested far less of the Temper of Christians, in their Conduct since, than some others that have been still, and have made no great outward Show. But then again there are many others, that have had extraordinary Joys and Emotions of Mind, with frequent great Effects on their Bodies, that behave themselves steadfastly, as humble, amiable, eminent Christians.

'Tis evident that there may be great religious Affections, that may in Shew and Appearance imitate gracious Affections, and have the same Effects on their *Bodies*, but are far from having the same Effect in the *Temper* of their *Minds*, and *Course* of their *Lives*. And likewise there is nothing more manifest by what appears amongst us, than that the Goodness of Persons *State* is not chiefly to be judged of by any exactness of Steps, and Method of Experiences, in what is supposed to be the first Conversion; but that we must judge more by the *Spirit* that *breathes*, the *Effect* wrought on the *Temper* of the *Soul*, in the Time of the Work, and *remaining afterwards*. Tho' there have been very few Instances among Professors amongst us, of what is ordinarily called scandalous Sin, known to me; yet the Temper that some of them shew, and the Behaviour they have been of, together with some Things in the Kind and Circumstances of their Experiences, make me much afraid least there be a considerable Number that have wofully deceived themselves. Tho' on the other Hand, there is a great Number whose Temper and Conversation is such as justly confirms the *Charity* of others towards them; and not a few in whose Disposition and Walk, there are amiable Appearances of eminent *Grace*. And notwithstanding all the corrupt Mixtures that

have

have been in the late Work here ; there are not only many blessed Fruits of it in *particular Persons*, that yet remain, but some good Effects of it upon the *Town in general*. A *Party-Spirit* has *more ceased* : I suppose there has been less Appearance these *three or four Years past*, of that Division of the Town into two Parties, that has long been our Bane, than has been these *thirty Years* ; and the People have apparently had much *more Caution*, and a *greater Guard* on their *Spirit*, and their *Tongues*, to avoid Contention and unchristianHeats, in Town-Meetings and on other Occasions. And 'tis a Thing greatly to be rejoiced in, that the People very lately have come to an *Agreement* and *final Issue*, with Respect to their grand Controversy, relating to their Common Lands ; which has been above any other particular Thing, a *Source of mutual Prejudices, Jealousies, and Debates*, for *fifteen or sixteen Years past*. The People are also generally of late in someRespects considerably alter'd and meliorated in their *No-tions of Religion* : particularly they seem to be much more sensible of the *Danger of resting in old Experiences*, or what they were Subjects of at their supposed first Conversion ; and to be more fully convinced of the *Necessity of forgetting the Things that are behind, and pressing forward, and maintaining earnest Labour, Watchfulness and Prayerfulness as long as they live*.

NORTHAMPTON, Decemb.

12. 1743.

Account of the Rev. Mr. HALE of NEWBURY, as sent to the Press by the Rev. Mr. WIGGLESWORTH of IPSWICH.

Byfield in Newbury, January 11. 1743.

ON Friday Night last died, and this Day was attended to his Grave, the Rev. Mr. MOSES HALE, our Pastor ; after having *labour'd among us in the Word and Doctrine about forty one Years*, and sustained the *Pastoral Relation* to this Church *thirty seven Years*, himself being in the *sixty sixth Year of his Age*.

During which Term he has been an orthodox and lively Preacher of the great Truths of Religion, and a *Soldier of CHRIST*,

CHRIST, the *Weapons of whose Warfare have been mighty by GOD to the pulling down of Satan's strong Holds*: an *Ambassador for CHRIST*, who hath not only prevailed with many of his Hearers to be *reconciled unto GOD*; but hath been many Times successful in persuading them to be *at Peace one with another*.

His natural Temper had something of Quickness in it; but then his second Thoughts and Expressions usually were such, as discovered much of a Spirit of Meekness & Forgiveness.

He readily acknowledged the *Agency of the SPIRIT of GOD in the late religious Motions*, blessed GOD for them as *his gracious Work*, and set himself strenuously to promote it: And tho' he saw Cause to bear *Testimony against some Excesses*, wherewith he apprehended the Devil was striving to blacken the beautiful Scene; yet he continued to the last in his Opinion, that it had been *a Day of CHRIST's Power*.

Since his Seizure by the Distempers that have prov'd mortal to him (which were the *Asthma and Dropsey*) he often express'd his steady Adherence to, and Reliance on that SAVIOUR, to whom he had committed his eternal Concerns; but withal his longing after further Manifestations of his Love; and this his Desire was granted: for it was observable, that the nearer the Enemy approach'd him, the more intrepid he grew; and in some of his last Words, he declar'd himself to be *full of the Spirit of Consolation*.

A great Multitude from this and the neighbouring Parishes, did him Funeral Honour; and his grateful Flock handomely contributed to the Charges of it.

He has left behind him a sorrowful *Widow*, with six *Children*, viz. *two Sons and four Daughters*: May GOD establish his Covenant with them.

Revival of Religion at PORTSMOUTH the chief Town in the Province of NEW-HAMPSHIRE in NEW-ENGLAND, about sixty four Miles North North Eastward of BOSTON: In a Letter from the Rev Mr. WILLIAM SHURTLEFF, Pastor of the 2d Church in PORTSMOUTH, to the late Rev. Mr. COOPER.

To

To the Reverend Mr. WILLIAM COOPER.

Portsmouth, in New-Hampshire, June 1. 1743.

Rev. and dear Sir,

AS it has pleased a sovereign God in the late *Revival of Religion*, highly to favour us, in this Part of the Land, and to make us Sharers in those heavenly Showers, with which he has been watering *these northern Colonies*; I have been sometimes ready to question, whether it would not discover want of Gratitude to the free and bountiful Dispenser of these rich, and invaluable Blessings, and so be affrontive to him, as well as offend the Generation of God's Children, not to publish with the *Voice of Thanksgiving*, and tell of his wondrous Works.

But partly from too great a Backwardness to enter upon a Business of this Nature, and partly because of having so much other Work constantly upon my Hands, I have neglected it as yet: And now I feel such a prevailing *Fear of overdoing*, that I am sensible I shall fall under Censure as erring on the other Hand by some that are well acquainted with our State: But the following *brief and general Account* such as it is, you may communicate to whom you please; and if you have not a more particular and compleat Narrative from some other Hand, and think the making this publick will be of the least Service to the Cause and Kingdom of our dear REDEEMER; don't let the Reproach it may upon one Account or other bring upon me, be any Obstruction to it.

You are doubtless in some Measure acquainted with the Character, which the People of *this Town* have heretofore generally sustained. They have I think been remark'd by Strangers for their Politeness in Dress and Behaviour; have been thought to go beyond most others in equal Circumstances, if not to exceed themselves, in their sumptuous and elegant Living, and Things of a like Nature: and while they have been justly in Repute for their generous and hospitable Disposition, and for many social Virtues; Diversions of various Kinds have been much in Fashion, and the Vices that have been usual in Sea-Port and trading Places, have been common and prevalent among us. We have I trust never been without a Number of sincere and serious Christians: but even these wise Virgins have slumber'd and slept: and as to the generally of Professors, they have seem'd for a great while to content themselves with an empty Form, and there has been but little of the *Life and Power of Religion* to be seen.

Indeed

Indeed the *great Earthquake* in the Year 1727, that put the whole Country into such a Surprize, was a Means of *awakening a great many* here : and as to some, there is Reason to think the Impressions have remain'd ; but as to the bigger Part, it was not long before they evidently wore off, and before they fell into their former sleepy and secure State ; and this has been generally the Case till of late.

Mr. WHITEFIELD's coming among us, and also Mr. TENNENT's, was I am perswaded bles'd of GOD ; and their Preaching made instrumental of putting a *great many* upon shaking off their heavy Slumbers : and how reproachfully soever any may speak of them, and their *Itinerancy* ; I must needs look upon their Travelling this Way as a favourable Providence, and that for which we owe abundant *Thanksgivings* to the GOD of all Grace.

As there had been for some Time a growing Concern among us, as to Things of a religious Nature, and a remarkable Work of GOD's Grace going on in many Parts of the Land ; the *Ministers* of this, and some other of the neighbouring Towns agreed upon observing a *monthly Fast*, in our respective Congregations, to seek for the like Blessing. When the Solemnity was attended in *this Town*, which was on *Wednesday November 25th 1741* ; as soon as the *Afternoon Service* was ended, *One* cried out in a Transport of Joy, and *Others* discover'd a great deal of Distress. The People did not care to disperse ; inasmuch that there was *another Sermon* in the *Evening* ; and a great Number of them, and some of the Ministers with them stay'd 'till in was late in the Place of public Worship. The *next Day* a *Sermon* was again preach'd in Public, and had an unusual Efficacy upon the Hearers. The *Day after* we had *two, or three Exercises*, and the Congregation great Part of it continued together 'till late at Night.

THIS FRIDAY was the most remarkable Day that was ever known among us. The whole Congregation seem'd deeply affected : And there was *such a general Out-cry*, in some from a distressing Sight of their Sins, and in others from a joyful Sense of the Love of CHRIST ; that could not but put a great many in Mind of the *Appearing of THE SON of MAN*, and of the different *Exclamations* that shall be heard from the Inhabitants of the World when they shall see *Him coming in the Clouds of Heaven, in Power, and great Glory.*

(To be continued.)